

**COASTAL IMPACT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
(CIAP)
Tier II**

1. PROJECT TITLE: Culvert Installation Through Existing Berms and Board Roads
2. ENTITY NOMINATING THE PROJECT: St. James Parish Council
3. CONTACT INFORMATION: Mr. Jody Chenier
St. James Parish Council
P. O. Box 106
Convent, LA 70723
Ph: (225) 562-2262
jody.chenier@stjamesla.com
4. TOTAL CIAP FUNDS REQUESTED: \$185,000
5. PARISH CIAP FUNDS REQUESTED: \$185,000
6. STATE CIAP FUNDS REQUESTED: None
7. INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDS PROPOSED: None
8. DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION OF PROJECT: The St. James Parish Council will install 24" plastic pipe through existing spoil banks and earthen berms to allow water exchange through these existing man-made barriers. Presently, throughout the west bank of St. James Parish, there are several old spoil banks that have impounded thousands of acres of swamps. The Parish will open cut several of these obstructions to allow water flow both into and out of these areas. In several cases, landowners require access across these berms and roads and will not allow the Parish to complete open cut channels. These areas have been identified, will be cut, and a 24" plastic pipe will be installed through these obstructions to re-establish natural water flow. The culvert installations will allow present ingress and egress into these areas to continue and enhance the water quality and nutrient exchange in the project area. The Parish proposes to install these culverts along the St. James Canal beginning at Latitude 29°54'36" - Longitude 90°43'48" and ending at Latitude 30°03'00" - Longitude 90°57'00". It is estimated that approximately 100 sites would need three sets of culverts to be installed along this 20 mile stretch of canal.
9. PROJECT TYPE: Conservation, restoration, and protection of coastal areas, including wetland.
10. PROJECT JUSTIFICATION: Since man moved into the marsh and wetland areas, we have built levees, berms, and dug canals for navigation to provide oil and gas exploration. Most of those canals were dug without regard to their impacts to the

surrounding wetland areas. The berms that were constructed along our swamp and marshland areas prevent sediments that are needed to sustain a wetland from entering into those impounded areas. Without sediment and fresh nutrients, subsidence can overtake wetland growth and lead to swamp deterioration. These berms have negatively impacted the hydrologic balance, which has lead to conditions that kill wetland vegetation. As wetlands disappear, the wells, pipelines, and roads that are needed to explore, extract, and produce products that make the oil and natural gas industry possible will be exposed to open water conditions. These problems can lead to high replacement cost and increase the likelihood of a spill or pipeline rupture, which increases the potential damage to wetlands and wetland habitats. The key to restoring and protecting our wetland swamps and our ecosystem is to manage and use the natural forces. The goals of the Coast 2050 were to create and sustain marsh and wetland areas by accumulating sediment and organic matter and maintain the exchange of energy and organisms. In the upper Barataria Basin, the lack of sediment in conjunction with subsidence and deteriorating wetlands has produced a coastal system that is collapsing.

The gapping of earthen berms and installation of plastic culverts will allow water transfer into the wetland areas identified under this proposal. The West St. James Canal traverses the Parish from one end to the other and is approximately 20 miles long. Earthen berms that were created when the canal was dug have caused impoundments that negatively affect over 100,000 acres. The installation of 24 inch culverts at approximately 100 different sites along this canal will provide an immediate, non-maintenance solution to the sediment and water isolation problem. The Parish has the necessary equipment and means to spearhead such a valuable and achievable project. The project benefits are easily identified and can be installed and maintained without any disruption of existing wetland areas while providing not only instantaneous results, but long-term benefits as well.

11. **PROJECT COST SHARE (NON-CIAP FUNDS):** The Parish has already hired an engineering consultant to develop and obtain a permit to dredge the West St. James Canal. The permit allows the Parish to re-establish and maintain the existing drainage canal and deposit the dredged material on the existing spoil bank. Some of the property owners have objected to gapping the spoil bank because it would limit their access to the property. The installation of plastic pipes will allow the Parish to re-establish some of the natural hydrology that is so vital to this wetland area. All landowners have expressed their willingness to allow the pipes to be installed, thus, providing a means that is acceptable to all parties involved. The Parish is prepared to use its own equipment and manpower to install the culverts, thereby, reducing the total cost of the Parish. In this effort, the Parish will provide in-kind labor estimated at \$15,000 toward the project. All other work will be provided under force account methods and will utilize FEMA rates for equipment and material. The Parish estimates that all work completed under this proposed project would take approximately 100 days to complete and would be completed with minimal impact to existing wetland areas since all work would be completed from inside the existing waterways.